

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MC-02
COME-00 /077 W

-----290848Z 037442 /23

R 281840Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4590
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

S E C R E T LIMA 3445

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: MASS, MPOL, PINR, PE
SUBJ: EFFECT OF ECUADOREAN AIRCRAFT PURCHASES ON ARMY BALANCE
IN ANDEAN SUB-REGION

REF: QUITO 2646

1. REFTEL INDICATES THAT ECUADOREAN AIR FORCE (FAE) IS
CONSIDERING A SHIFT AWAY FROM A DEFENSIVE CONCEPT BASED ON
INTERCEPTORS TO A DETERRENT STRATEGY BASED ON ATTACK AIR-
CRAFT. EMBASSY QUITO INVITES OUR COMMENTS ABOUT THE IMPACT
ON PERU OF AN ECUADOREAN PURCHASE OF FIGHTER BOMBERS AS
OPPOSED TO INTERCEPTORS.

2. WE THINK THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION IS THE POSSIBLE PERUVIAN
PERCEPTION OF A CHANGE IN ECUADOREAN STRATEGY, NOT THE
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MECHANICAL MEANS TO CARRY IT OUT. AIRA POINTS OUT THAT NO
AIRCRAFT RECENTLY CONSIDERED FOR ACQUISITION BY ECUADOR (OR
PERU) IS A TRUE INTERCEPTOR. THE MIRAGE 5, ALONG WITH THE
SU-22, F-5 AND KFIR ARE FIGHTER-BOMBERS OR TACTICAL FIGHTERS
WITH GROUND ATTACK AND AIR-TO-AIR CAPABILITY. WE ASSUME,
HOWEVER, THAT PERU WOULD SOON LEARN OF A CHANGE IN THE ECUADOREAN
STRATEGIC AIR CONCEPT TO ONE OF DETERRENCE. INDEED, TO ENHANCE

DETERRENCE, ECUADOR MIGHT SEEK TO ENSURE PERUVIAN AWARENESS THAT AN ATTACK WOULD RISK BRINGING A RETALIATORY MIRAGE 5 ATTACK ON PERUVIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING LIMA.

3. WE BELIEVE THE PERUVIAN REACTION TO ECUADOR'S ACQUISITION OF 24 MIRAGE 5'S WOULD BE NEGATIVE ALTHOUGH PERU WOULD PRE-SUMABLY BE LESS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH AN ECUADOREAN PURCHASE OF MIRAGE 5'S THAN KFIR'S SINCE THE LATTER IS A MORE ADVANCED AND VERSATILE AIRCRAFT. WE THINK PERUVIAN MILITARY PLANNERS WOULD ADD THIS NEW ECUADOREAN MIRAGE CAPABILITY TO THE CAPABILITIES OF CHILE AND BOLIVIA IN TOTING UP THE OFFENSIVE "THREAT" TO PERU, SINCE WE BELIEVE PERU PERCEIVES THAT ALL THREE COUNTRIES WOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN A PERUVIAN CONFLICT WITH ONE OF THEM.

4. PERU MIGHT SEEK TO OFFSET AN ECUADOREAN MIRAGE PURCHASE WITH ANOTHER LARGE PURCHASE OF ITS OWN. HOWEVER, PERU'S CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WOULD SEEM TO RULE OUT ANY SUPPLIER BUT THE USSR, AND PERU MIGHT BE CONSTRAINED FROM ANOTHER SOVIET DEAL BY POTENTIAL REACTIONS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, PARTICULARLY IF THE SOVIETS ATTACHED "POLITICAL" CONDITIONS SUCH AS A LARGER NUMBER OF RESIDENT SOVIET TECHNICIANS.

5. WE SUSPECT THAT ON BALANCE, AN ECUADOREAN PURCHASE OF MIRAGE 5'S AND CHANGE TO A DETERRENT STRATEGY WOULD DECREASE THE CHANCES OF A CONFLICT INITIATED BY PERU WITH ANY OF ITS NEIGHBORS. IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE INCREASED PERUVIAN FENCE-MENDING EFFORTS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS TO AVOID ANY NEW WAGAFEARS IN THE ANDES THAT COULD BECOME DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE A CHANGE IN THE ECUADOREAN STRATEGIC PLAN TO INCLUDE AN
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AIR ATTACK IN PERU WOULD INCREASE PERUVIAN DETERMINATION, IN CASE A WAR SEEMED IMMINENT, TO PREEMPT AN ECUADOREAN BOMBING STRIKE. TO THAT EXTENT, SUCH AN ECUADOREAN PURCHASE AND CHANGE IN STRATEGIC PLAN WOULD BE DESTABILIZING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, BALANCE OF POWER
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770410/aaaaahyv.tel
Line Count: 102
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